

Position
Paper

HOW TO GET CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE RESEARCH RIGHT

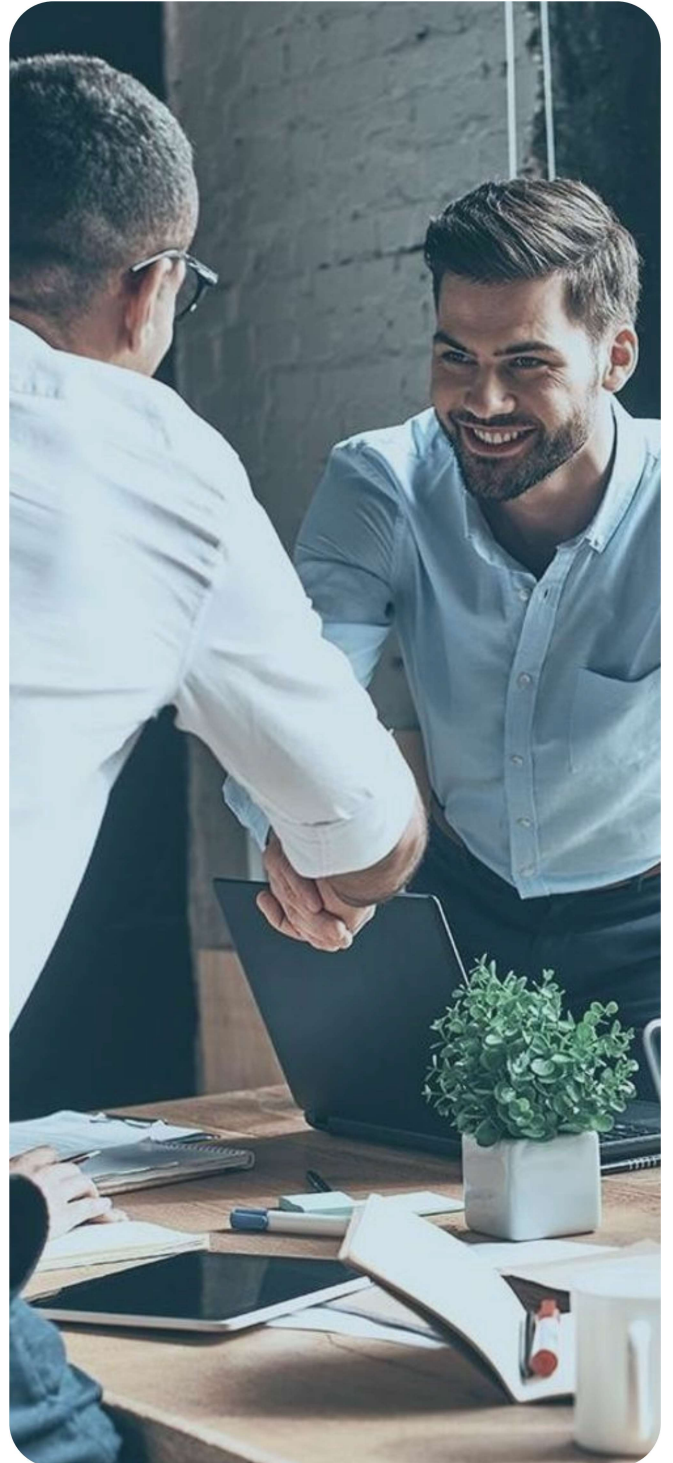
- Brought to you by
- Dominique Vanmarsenille



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will deliver

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• What customer experience research will deliver

Our customer experience experts will ...

- Measure how many customers are **committed** and how many would potentially **switch** to competition
- Identify the extent to which your customers **advocate** the brand and assist you in attracting new customers
- Detect the key **drivers** of customer commitment, enabling you to earn loyalty from your customers and gain share of wallet
- Define an **action plan** for boosting commitment and advocacy and for avoiding potential switching behaviour
- Assist you in making the necessary organisational and operational **changes** to enchant your customers



• How to get your customer experience research right?

Prepare well

- We usually start the research journey with a so-called **exploratory** stage. Customer-facing **staff** will be able to help identify which attributes to measure for the various touchpoints and processes. They understand the issues and will welcome the invitation. We can organise internal workshops with relevant divisions, complemented by in-depth interviews with **customers** your company interacts with regularly.
- Then we follow up with a so-called **quantitative** stage in which we conduct interviews with a robust sample of your customers. Such interviews are mostly structured to ensure that all relevant relationship and product/service, touchpoint and process attributes are covered. This does not exclude asking open-ended questions to which the respondents can air their opinion; answers to such open-ended questions will subsequently be coded so that we can distinguish commonalities from singular expressions. Typically, a full customer experience survey takes 15-20 minutes to complete, whereas a typical transactional survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete.

Identify the **right audience**

- Should we include all customers or restrict the survey to those who make up at least 80% of the revenue?
- Should key accounts be included in the survey, or will they be approached directly by your Account Managers?
- Which customer segments (sectors, products/services, revenue stream, tenure ...) do you wish to analyse separately? A specific focus on recent customers should prove interesting to find out why they have chosen you rather than a competitor.
- Can we identify 1 customer to represent a company, or should we interview various decision makers or influencers (e.g. Procurement, R&D, etc.) to obtain a reliable picture of how they experience our products and services?

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Will you include ...

- Prospects (or customers of competitors) for benchmarking purposes? Should we only benchmark against generic competition, or do you wish to compare yourself to exemplary companies in other sectors?
- Lapsed customers to find out what made them churn, what the current supplier does better, estimate the win-back potential and identify the win-back action plan?

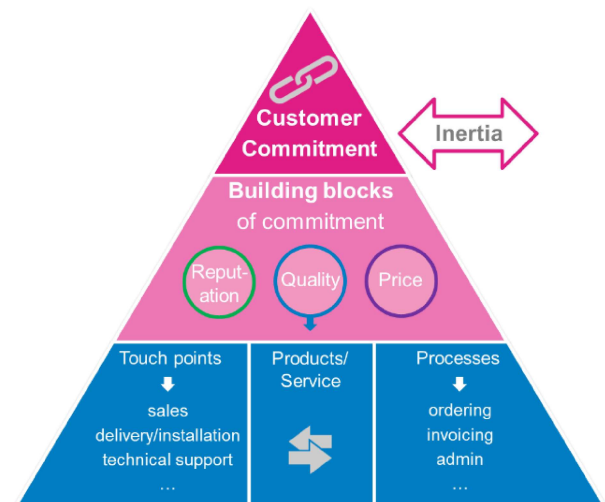
Bearing in mind that satisfied and motivated staff make satisfied customers, should we include staff (in direct contact with customers and/or having client responsibilities) in our survey to evaluate how they perceive or experience your delivery? Our experience demonstrates that staff is more willing to accept the survey results and contribute more positively to an improvement journey when they are involved in the survey process and have been given the opportunity to air their opinion and concerns.

Define the **right sample**, allowing you to confidently analyse results in all customer segments you wish to focus your analysis on with sufficient statistical relevance. It is of utmost importance to start building a suitable database with accurate contact details and relevant internal information

(e.g. volume, turnover, profit, tenure, products/services bought, complaints, etc.) as soon as possible in the process. Often this proves to be a more difficult task than foreseen. Also important is ensuring that potential respondents are selected randomly and not pre-selected (e.g. by salespeople identifying their most satisfied customers) in order to avoid any bias in the results.

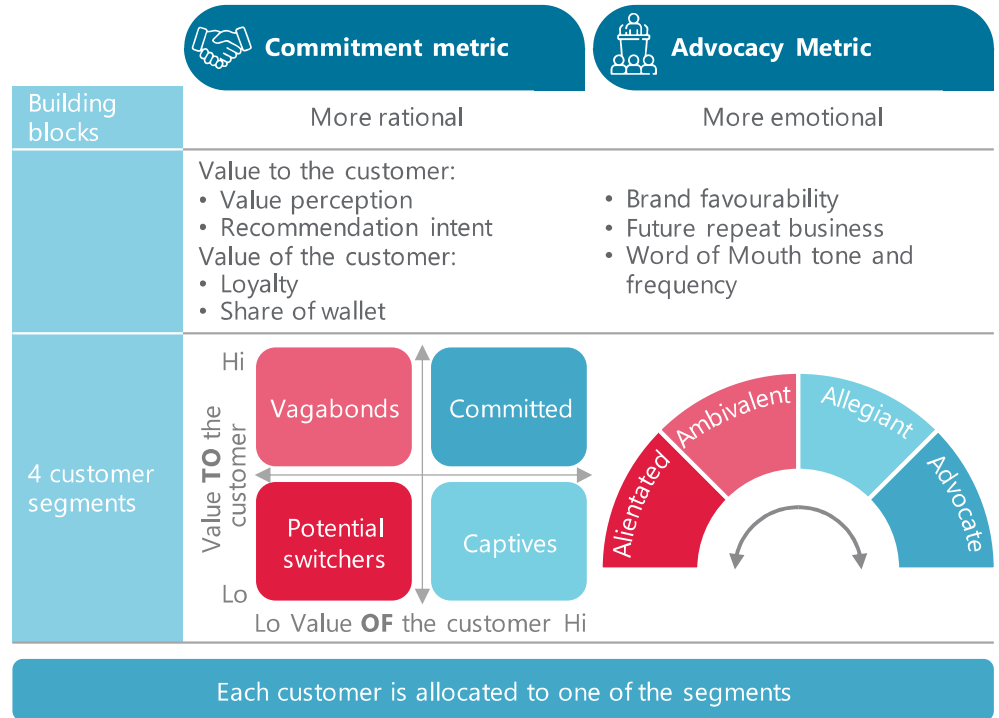
Develop the **right questionnaire**

... salient for you, relevant for the respondents, user-friendly, clearly worded, the right length, offering customers to voice their experiences, feelings and views. At b²sense, a typical customer experience questionnaire is outlined as follows:



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- Use the right **metric** for depicting your relationship with your customers. b²sense uses proven metrics based on multiple, empirically tested questions. We select the best metric for your specific situation, depending on the ratio versus emotion balance in your sector.



- Measure customer inertia** ... Do (potential) customers usually stick to the same supplier (because they are risk averse, because the current situation is comfortable, because head office leaves them no choice...)? Are they willing to try out new brands or do they easily switch when a better deal comes along?
- Measure** the extent to which your company performs well in terms of **reputation and price**, next to product quality and service culture. Empirical research by b²sense revealed that reputation and/or price can play a significant role in customer commitment and advocacy and sometimes drive commitment and advocacy more than quality improvements.



- Identify the **relevant touchpoints** and **processes** which impact customer experience throughout the customer journey ...

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- Use a **clear KPI** for evaluating your company's product/service, touchpoint and price performance. A possible KPI candidate is satisfaction (e.g. a score from 0 to 10, where 0 means extremely dissatisfied and 10 means extremely satisfied). Whilst satisfaction is the most commonly used KPI, we wish to point out that:
 - Satisfaction is basically the result of an expectation being met by a given performance level. Hence it is difficult to detect whether a changing satisfaction score is the result of a change in expectations or in performance
 - Expectations can change over time and such changes may even be induced by competitive performance
 - Satisfaction is very often highly sensitive to specific events and hence fickle by nature
- Measure **experienced performance** rather than perceived performance, asking customers only to evaluate what they have experienced.
- Include a **problem experience analysis** in the survey. In this section, we investigate whether a minor to serious problem arose in the last 6-12 months, details about the problem (only when customers can describe the problem, will it be relevant to them), whether the problem occurred multiple times, whether it was brought to your attention (hence offering you a chance to amend it and avoid the possibility that they take their business elsewhere), whether you resolved it promptly and to their satisfaction and how this affects commitment and potential switching behaviour.

We therefore advise to measure performance (that is, whether you delivered on time) rather than satisfaction with performance, the former being a purer measure which can more easily and directly be translated into action points than satisfaction scores. Besides, few customers are satisfied with prices even though your prices can surely be competitive.

	problem experience	reported problem	solved problem	% all	% committed	% pot. switcher
!	no 70%			75%	+5 pts	-5 pts
	yes 30%			25%	-10 pts	+5 pts
↘		no 40%		12%	-12 pts	+6 pts
		yes 60%		18%	-8 pts	+5 pts
↘			no 33%	6%	-25 pts	+25 pts
			yes 67%	12%	-2 pts	-2 pts

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pp

We advise to measure performance rather than satisfaction.

dd



Include **contextual elements** and external events which can impact the customer experience ... in cases where an affiliate is not a decision maker, touchpoint/ process evaluations remain relevant, but loyalty questions may not be relevant.



Use the **right scales**. For satisfaction, we recommend using a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means "extremely satisfied" and 0 means "extremely dissatisfied". For analysis purposes, we advise to consider a score of 8 as a minimum for classifying a customer as "satisfied". For performance, we recommend using a 4-point "apply" scale with 2 positives and 2 negatives.



Evaluate at the **right time**, bearing in mind yours and your competitors' activity (new product/service launches, price changes, communication campaigns, process improve-ments, re-organisations, etcetera), or measure continuously so that the impact of such changes can be measured and steered.

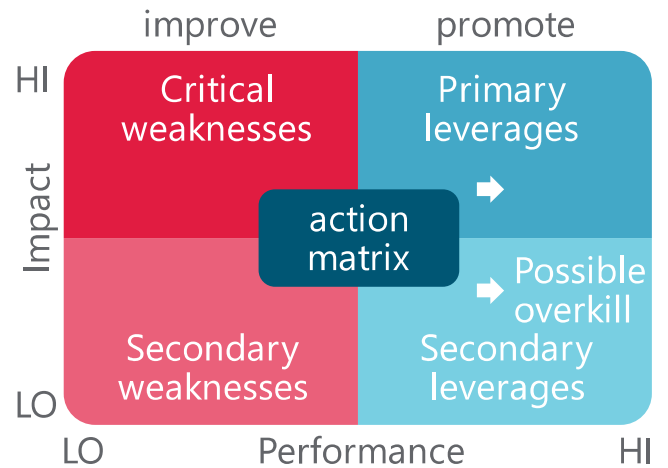


Measure in the **right way** so that the response rate is maximised, clients feel valued, information is collected correctly ... face to face, phone, online or any combination of these. Online BtoB customer experience surveys usually are not very representative because of the low response rates. At b²sense, we have reached response rates ranging from 50% to 80% by using hybrid data-collection methods (phone and online) and offering full flexibility to your customers to respond whenever it suits them best. For guaranteeing full objectivity of the results and anonymity to the customers, we advise to outsource data collection to an independent agency rather than use salespeople or internal call centre agents (they may well be the cause of problems) or to organise your proprietary online customer surveys. We usually reserve face-to-face interviewing for your top clients.

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- When talking to your customers, we can choose at the start whether or not to reveal your name. We advise to **state the sponsor's name** at the beginning of the interview. Not only is this a GDPR requirement, but it also boosts response rates and allows you to show your customer centricity.
- We recommend that you **pre-notify** your customers of the survey. Not only will it enhance the response rate and hence the representativeness of the study, but it also offers an opportunity to get in touch with your customer and position your company as customer centric and serve a PR purpose.
- **Develop a realistic road map** with tangible actions per touchpoint and process in close cooperation with strategic and operational management. Share results and priority improvement plans with all staff who need to implement the necessary changes. In some cases, we may need to investigate specific problem areas or test the impact of alternative improvement routes prior to implementation.

For identifying priority improvement, we compare your *performance* (ideally bench-marked against competition) with *impact* (the extent to which a touchpoint- or process improvement generates higher customer commitment):



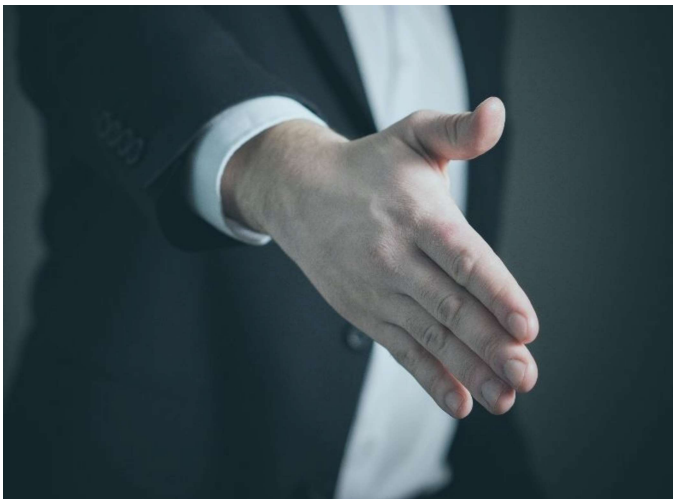
We can also analyse whether a unified strategy is possible for both boosting customer commitment and reducing potential switching behaviour with our so-called butterfly analysis:



How to get Customer Experience research right

Share the results with staff and customers:

- Results should not only be shared with management but also with the various services/divisions which will be involved in the improvement journey. Workshops can be set up in which relationship- and division-specific results are shown, and a brainstorm is organised on how to eliminate the pain points. Follow-up workshops will be necessary to refine the action plan, define budgets, timelines and hurdles and to ensure that the plan is followed through.



Going beyond research ...

Change programs, setting up buyer and customer journey platforms and integrating our research insights with these platforms will be conducted in close cooperation with your regular suppliers or with our preferred partner Minds & More (www.mindsandmore.biz).

- When asking your customers for their input, it is only justified to provide **feedback** on the survey results to your customers, be they good or bad. If results are positive, it will strengthen their belief in your brand. If not, your improvement plans will hopefully retain them from switching. In any case, this PR exercise offers an opportunity for your company to tighten the relationship. Depending on the number of customers and the way you are organised, a one-to-one feedback session with your customer to discuss the results and improvement opportunities may prove very helpful. b²sense can produce individual customer reports as a basis for such sessions.



Our Mission

We foster a caring spirit and a result-driven objective: to **deliver impactful insights via a tailored research approach aimed at easing our clients' business challenges beyond the operational level.** Via inventive solutions, vast multi-sector experience and a drive for efficiency we continue to meet the evolving expectations of local and global business communities of tomorrow.

Because when people thrive, so do their businesses.



Our Vision for the future

To become the go-to-reference for resolving **challenging queries across the customer chain**, for both local & global businesses through inventive research and impactful insights.

B2B2C

With end-consumers playing an increasingly important part, the need for integrated **b2b** and **b2c** research is on the rise. Our roots in b2b research combined with our capabilities in end-user and consumer research means we can help our clients with any b2b2c requirements.

solutions



Our research team brings a wealth of methodological- and sector **expertise** in **Brand, Customer experience, Innovation** as well as **market opportunities.** Combined with an inventive and forward-thinking approach, it is important to us to think with our clients and find **solutions** that work for them.



Via our in-house call center and our extensive **eco-system** of local and global research partners, we can cover **any** type of research in just about any market that our clients require.



We work as part of a larger community where like-minded partners like **Minds&More** and links with academic communities provide additional tools and opportunities to stay up to date with, teach and **make sense** of our business and social environments.

Our enthusiastic team built legion experience in numerous **industrial** and **services** sectors. We know how to reach the relevant **target** groups and retrieve relevant **insights**, using our own data-collection capabilities and trusted fieldwork partners and applying research **methods** and **models**, aligned to target groups in each country.

 Building & construction	 Business services	 Energy
 Food	 Finance & insurance	 Health Wellbeing
 Industry & Technology	 Telecom & ICT	 Transport & Logistics

Our DNA leads to satisfied advocates

-  **Connect**
Understand your challenges business issues and needs for insights
-  **Customize**
Blank page approach, identifying the best solution to your problem. Sharing our experience and expertise
-  **Commit**
Senior project management team with pro-active, can-do and "team" attitude, committing to full customer satisfaction



90%
Satisfied clients



90%
Of our clients is (very) likely to **recommend** us



Airport Plaza Campus
Leonardo da Vincilaan 19A box 8
1831 Diegem
www.b2sense.com

About the Author



DOMINIQUE VANMARSENILLE

Managing Partner
at b²sense



dominique.vanmarsenille@
b2sense.com



+32 475 90 75 05



[https://www.linkedin.com/in/
dominiquevanmarsenille/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dominiquevanmarsenille/)



Based in Belgium, Dominique is a founding member of b²sense after a management buy out from Kynetec. With more than 35 years' experience in BtoC- and BtoB-market research, Dominique is widely experienced in domestic and international market research working for many reputable companies across a wide range of sectors.

Dominique is a marketer and researcher with a wide spectrum of interests. Research has drawn his attention since the very beginning of his career, being very eager to learn, understand, grasp, collide ideas, develop, trigger, listening and advising. He had the opportunity to work for a whole series of great international clients and government bodies, gaining knowledge about a wide pallet of sectors and solutions. For Dominique, research should translate into actions and that is what he promises to deliver at the end of each piece of research ... data- and marketing driven action points.

His mission is to help businesses achieve their business goals and protect their long-term assets: their customers, their employees and their brands. To accomplish this, he subscribes to a set of core values: maintain the integrity of the data, protect the confidentiality of client information, aspire to the highest standards of intellectual honesty, remain flexible to new ideas, achieve the epitome of client service and fulfil our promises with exemplary research.

With a thirst for innovation, Dominique has developed numerous programs in the area of customer and employee engagement surveys for blue-chip companies and international bodies such as the European Commission.